Section 1: PURPOSE AND NEED

This section defines the action by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) that is the subject of this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and establishes the purpose and need for that action. In this section, the National, Regional and Local purposes and needs for the action are presented, including the established logical termini and independent utility in the event that construction of adjacent Sections of Independent Utility are delayed or not completed.

1.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The DOTD, in cooperation with the FHWA, proposes to construct a segment of the proposed Interstate Highway 69 (I–69) in Bossier, Caddo, and DeSoto Parishes, Louisiana. The proposed highway is a portion of the planned improvements to Congressionally-designated High Priority Corridor Number 18 (Corridor 18), which extends from the Canadian border at Port Huron, Michigan to several points on the Mexican/Texas border (see Exhibit 1-1). The purpose of Corridor 18 is to improve international and interstate trade in accordance with national and state goals; facilitate economic development in accordance with state, regional, and local policies; and extend the Interstate highway system consistent with national, state, regional, and local needs.

The proposed project, ***hereafter referred to as the I-69 project,*** would provide a divided four-lane, limited access highway on new location between US Highway 171 (US 171) near the Town of Stonewall in DeSoto Parish, and Interstate Highway 20 (I–20) near the Town of Haughton in Bossier Parish, a distance of approximately 35 miles. The routing and logical termini are identified and described in the Corridor 18 Special Issues Study (1997) and in the I-69 (Corridor 18) Special Environmental Study, Task C Report - Sections of Independent Utility (SIU) report (1999) for SIU 15. The Study Area encompasses portions of Bossier, Caddo, and DeSoto Parishes (see Exhibit 1-2). An evaluation of social, economic, environmental, and engineering considerations will further refine the proposed highway location.

DOTD initiated studies for the preparation of an EIS for the I-69 project in April 2001.

1.2 NATIONAL I-69 CORRIDOR

In the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), the United States Congress designated certain highway corridors of national significance to be included in the National Highway System. Twenty-one "high priority corridors" were so designated mainly in regions that are not well

served by the existing Interstate Highway System. The I-69 Corridor at that time was identified as Corridor 18 and only included the corridor between Indianapolis and Memphis. Congress has subsequently extended the limits of I-69 to now include a highway corridor from the Canadian border in Michigan to the Mexican border in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas.

Since 1991, several planning studies have been undertaken to address a variety of issues associated with the Congressional designation for I-69. Though the planning process, improvements within the I-69 Corridor have been deemed feasible with overall travel efficiency benefits outweighing the overall cost of constructing and maintaining the roadway; special issues such as general locations of major river crossings have been addressed; a nationwide purpose and need has been established; and the 1,600-mile I-69 Corridor has been divided into 32 Sections of Independent Utility.

1.2.1 I-69 Steering Committee

Following the passage of ISTEA, a Steering Committee was formed with members representing the eight states along the corridor. The member states are Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana, and Michigan. Each state department of transportation and the FHWA are represented on the Steering Committee. Initially, the Steering Committee was referred to as the Corridor 18 Steering Committee but was renamed the I-69 Steering Committee following the passage of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), which officially changed the corridor designation from Corridor 18 to I-69. The Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) is the administrative agency acting on behalf of the I-69 Steering Committee.

In recognition of the important role that I-69 can play, the Steering Committee adopted the following statement of overall purpose for the I-69 Corridor:

"To improve international and interstate trade in accordance with national and state goals; to facilitate economic development in accordance with state, regional and local policies and plans, and to improve surface transportation consistent with national, state, regional, and local needs and with Congressional designation of the corridor."


MINNEAPOLIS
MILWAUKEE
DETROIT
TOLEDO
CHICAGO
OMAHA
DES MOINES
COLUMBUS
SPRINGFIELD
INDIANAPOLIS
CINCINNATI
I-69 CORRIDOR
TOPEKA
KANSAS CITY
ST. LOUIS
LOUISVILLE
WICHITA
KNOXVILLE
NASHVILLE
TULSA
MEMPHIS
OKLAHOMA CITY
LITTLE ROCK
ATLANTA
BIRMINGHAM
DALLAS–FORT WORTH
SHREVEPORT
JACKSON
STUDY AREA
MOBILE
AUSTIN
HOUSTON
LAFAYETTE
NEW ORLEANS
SAN ANTONIO
I-69 CORRIDOR
LAREDO
McALLEN
BROWNSVILLE
N
W
E
S
I-69, SIU 15
US 171 to I-20
Exhibit 1-1
INTERSTATE SYSTEM LINKAGE
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0
110
SCALE IN MILES
DOTD

Based on the nationwide purpose established for the I-69 Corridor, the I-69 Steering Committee also identified seven goals that include:

- Improving international and interstate movement of freight and people by ensuring a safe transportation system that is accessible, integrated, and efficient while offering flexibility of transportation choices in mid-America
- Enhancing the regional and local transportation systems by providing transportation capacity to meet current and future needs
- Facilitating economic development and enhance economic growth opportunities domestically and internationally through efficient and flexible transportation with particular emphasis being given to economic growth in the Lower Mississippi Delta region
- Facilitating connections to intermodal facilities and major ports along the corridor
- Facilitating the safe and efficient movement of persons and goods by fostering a reduction in incident risk
- Upgrading existing facilities to be utilized as I-69 within the corridor to design standards suitable for an Interstate highway and commensurate with the projected demand
- Directly connecting the urban areas named by Congress (the "named cities" of Indianapolis, Evansville, Memphis, Shreveport/Bossier City, and Houston and the Lower Rio Grande Valley) with an Interstate highway connection.

TEA-21 provided several additional stipulations for the I-69 Corridor:

- Included the existing I-69 segment from Indianapolis north to the Port Huron, Michigan border crossing with Canada
- Included existing I-94 from Port Huron, Michigan through Detroit (including the Ambassador Bridge interchange) to Chicago, Illinois
- Required the corridor to follow the “alignment” generally identified in the Special Issues Study in Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas
- Provided for a connection from Pine Bluff, Arkansas to the corridor identified in the Special Issues Study near Monticello, Arkansas
- Included connections to four ports of entry on the Mexican border in the Lower Rio Grande Valley:
  - A connection to Laredo following US 59 from the Mexican border to Victoria, Texas
  - A connection to McAllen following US 281 from the Mexican border to US 59, then following US 59 to Victoria, Texas

Shreveport
Shreveport Regional Airport
Union Pacific Railroad
BOSSIER
CADDO
Bossier City
Red Chute
Bodcau
Kansas City Southern Railway
Southern Pacific Transportation Co.
Eastwood
Barksdale Air Force Base
Stonewall
Robson
Sunny Point Lake
Curtis
Naylor
Port of Shreveport – Bossier
Wallace Lake
Kickapoo
Gloster
Gayles
Watson Lake
Old River Lake
Haughton
Louisiana Army Ammunition Plant
Oakland
Red
Stumpy Lake
Koran
WEBSTER
Lake Bistineau
Frierson
DESOTO
Caspiana
Knot Point
River
Elm Grove
RED RIVER
Cooterville
BIENVILLE
STUDY AREA

I–69, SIU 15
US 171 to I–20

Exhibit 1–2

STUDY AREA

Baker | NOT TO SCALE | DOTD

- US 71 from the Mexican border near Brownsville to US 59, then following US 59 to Victoria, Texas; and
- A connection from US 77 along FM 511 to the Port of Brownsville.

1.2.2 Previous Studies

Several planning studies have been completed in the ten years since I-69 was officially designated in ISTEA. Two feasibility studies (Corridor 18 and Corridor 20) were completed in 1995 and 1996 respectively. Both feasibility studies confirmed that the corridor was a feasible transportation improvement and a prudent expenditure of public funds. The Corridor 18 Special Issues Study (Steering Committee 1997) addressed three special issues to facilitate future location and environmental studies:

- ❑ Economic feasibility of extending Corridor 18 from Houston to the Lower Rio Grande Valley
- ❑ Traffic impacts Corridor 18 would have on I-35, and
- ❑ Evaluating major river crossings, connections between states, and connections to urban areas that would be key considerations for future location and environmental studies.

Shreveport is one of the named urbanized areas in the Congressional definition of Corridor 18. The Special Issues Study references a 1992 City of Shreveport study "*Interstate 69 and Inner Loop Extension Compatibility Report*" (Shreveport 1992), that proposed a location for Corridor 18 through the Shreveport metropolitan area that:

- ❑ Interchanges with I-20 on the east side of the urban area (near Haughton)
- ❑ Passes along the eastern edge of Barksdale Air Force Base
- ❑ Crosses LA 1 just north of the Caddo-Bossier Port
- ❑ Interchanges with I-49 south of the urban area, and
- ❑ Continues westerly to an interchange with US 171

The Special Issues Study noted that this location and route configuration had the support of the mayors of both Shreveport and Bossier City, and accordingly, was adopted for purposes of the Special Issues Study.

In 1999, the Special Environmental Study was initiated to facilitate the Corridor's transition into the FHWA National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. The Special Environmental Study accomplished the following tasks:

- ❑ Provided a nationwide Purpose and Need for the project, including updates to the national traffic demand forecasts for both vehicles and freight

- ❑ Divided the 1,600-mile corridor into 32 Sections of Independent Utility (SIU) that could be carried forward through the NEPA process

- ❑ Determined that I-69 should be an interstate highway project, but should also consider relationships with other modal options.

In addition to these Steering Committee sponsored studies; several states had already undertaken or are currently undertaking several studies that have been incorporated into the I-69 Corridor. Those studies include the Southwest Indiana Highway Corridor, the Mississippi State Highway 304 Corridor, the Great River Bridge crossing of the Mississippi River, the US 59 Corridor Master Plan from Diboll, Texas, to Garrison, Texas, and the I-69 Route Feasibility Study in the Houston metropolitan area.

1.2.3 Legislative History

The I-69 Corridor has been supported by Congressional mandates since 1991. It was first approved as a high priority corridor from Indianapolis to Memphis in the 1991 ISTEA legislation. In 1993, it was further amended by Congress to extend from Memphis to Houston. The National Highway System Designation Act of 1995 further extended the corridor from Houston to include the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas.

TEA-21 redefined Corridor 18 and officially designated it as Interstate 69 (see Exhibit 1-3) and amended the ISTEA legislation, specifying that I-69 in Louisiana shall follow the alignment generally identified in the Corridor 18 Special Issues Study report (see Section 1.2.2).

1.2.4 Need for a Nationwide I-69 Corridor

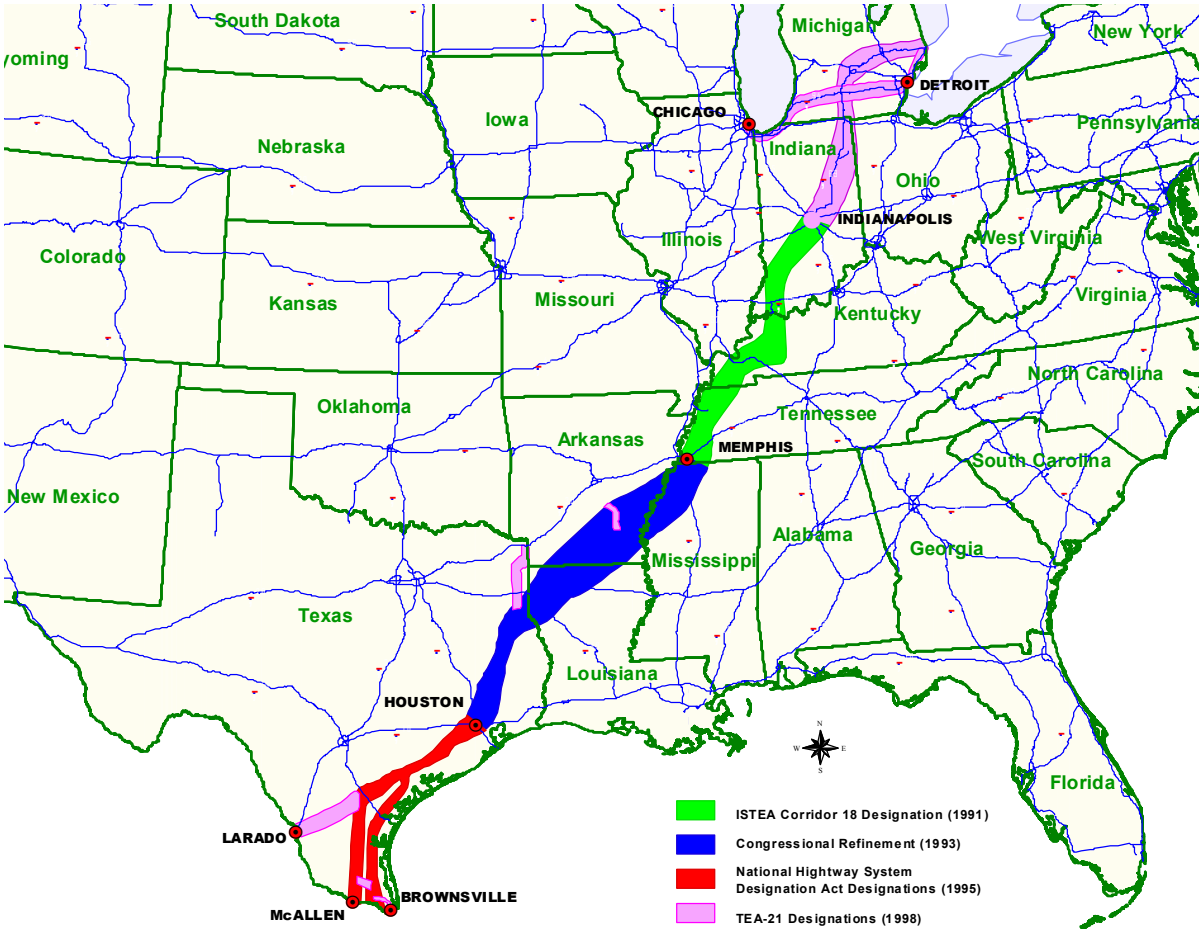
Previous feasibility studies completed for the I-69 Corridor have demonstrated that extending I-69 from Indianapolis, through Memphis, Bossier City and Houston to the Mexican border in the Lower Rio Grande Valley would be a feasible project. The anticipated dollar savings to the traveling public, combined with the potential for economic growth in the region, exceeds the cost to develop the facility by a significant margin.

Through work completed during the previous studies, the Steering Committee recognized that there were three primary needs that completion of I-69 would address:

- ❑ More efficiently move goods, primarily by truck, within the continental United States

- ❑ Improve the economic development opportunities in the traditionally depressed Mississippi Delta and Lower Rio Grande Valley regions

- ❑ Provide for improved transportation linkages in areas of the United States overlooked in the original interstate system.



I-69
US 171 to I-20

Exhibit 1-3

CONGRESSIONAL DESIGNATION OF THE I-69 CORRIDOR

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Movement of Goods

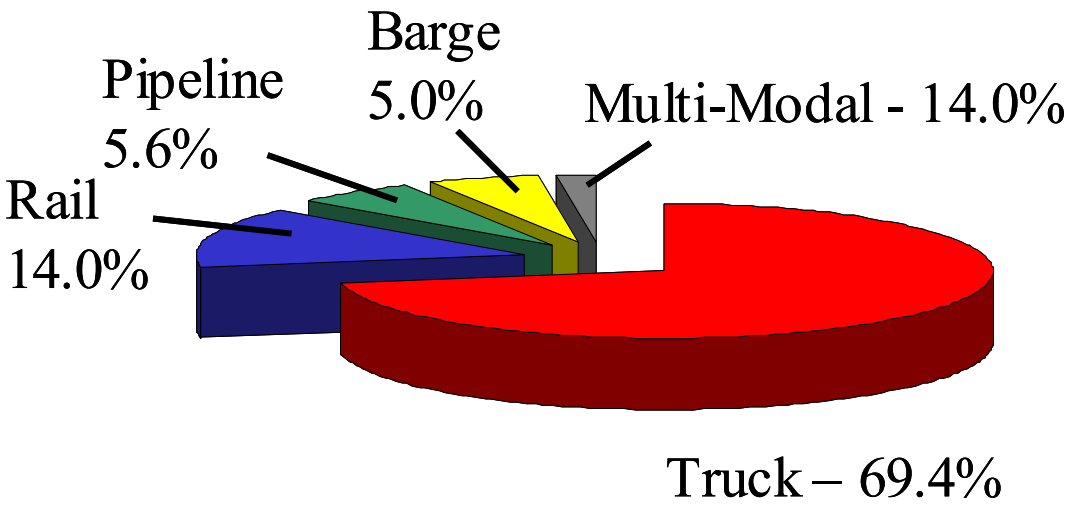
Both domestic and international freight flow within the United States have increased dramatically. A 1999 USDOT commodity flow survey estimated that between 1993 and 1997 the total freight tonnage shipped in the United States increased by over 14 percent and the total increase in value of that cargo over the same period increased by almost 19 percent, which equates to between a 3 and 5 percent increase in goods movement per year. The commodity flow survey also indicated that truck shipments accounted for nearly 70 percent of the 11 billion freight tons shipped in 1997 (see Exhibit 1-4). The significant increase in both domestic and international freight flow within the United States has been attributed to the implementation of the 1993 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between Canada, the United States and Mexico, the increased reliance on businesses for "just-in-time" delivery of goods, and the advent of the "global economy".

An FHWA study suggests that the recent growth in freight traffic will continue through the year 2020. The study estimates that total domestic freight traffic will increase by approximately 87 percent over the next twenty years and that international trade will increase by over 107 percent. The vast majority of the new growth will be in the trucking industry with trucks expected to handle 68 percent of the increased tonnage, 82 percent of the increased value and 62 percent of the increased ton-miles (USDOT 2000).

Transportation decision-makers are faced with the growing problem of how to address the problems of congestion, safety, and operating created by the expected influx in goods while at the same time facilitating the economic prosperity enjoyed over the last decade all within the fiscal and environmental constraints of adding capacity to the nation's infrastructure. I-69 has been identified as a potential partial solution to that expected dilemma.

Information provided in the 1999 Commodity Flow Survey identified the following regarding the I-69 Corridor:

- Over 5 billion tons of freight passed through, originating from or terminating in the I-69 Corridor states, representing approximately one half of the total freight shipped in the United States in 1997
- The vast majority of the shipments in the I-69 Corridor were local in nature (72 percent), while over 21 percent had either an origin or a destination within the corridor and the remaining 70 percent were comprised of through movements



Modal Distribution by Tonnage

I-69 US 171 to I-20		
Exhibit 1-4 **MODAL DISTRIBUTION BY TONNAGE**		
Baker	NOT TO SCALE	DOTD

- Over 90 percent of the domestic freight shipped to or from the states within the I-69 Corridor was moved by truck - representing approximately 3.5 billion tons.

A number of the most heavily traveled truck corridors that parallel the I-69 Corridor are expecting significant increases in truck traffic over the course of the next twenty years. The existing truck percentages along those routes currently range from 20 to 40 percent and those percentages are expected to continue to rise.

The majority of the expected growth in truck shipments will continue to be in the central, eastern and southern United States, with a dominant movement in the southwest to northeast direction, a movement ideally suited for the I-69 Corridor (see Exhibit 1-5).

A large portion of the international freight originating in or destined to Canada is expected to move along routes generally parallel to I-69. Exhibit 1-6 illustrates that some of that freight would utilize the I-69 Corridor were it in place. Similar freight flows exist between the US and Mexico. A large volume of freight to and from Mexico is expected to be diverted to the I-69 Corridor from South Texas to Memphis (see Exhibit 1-7).

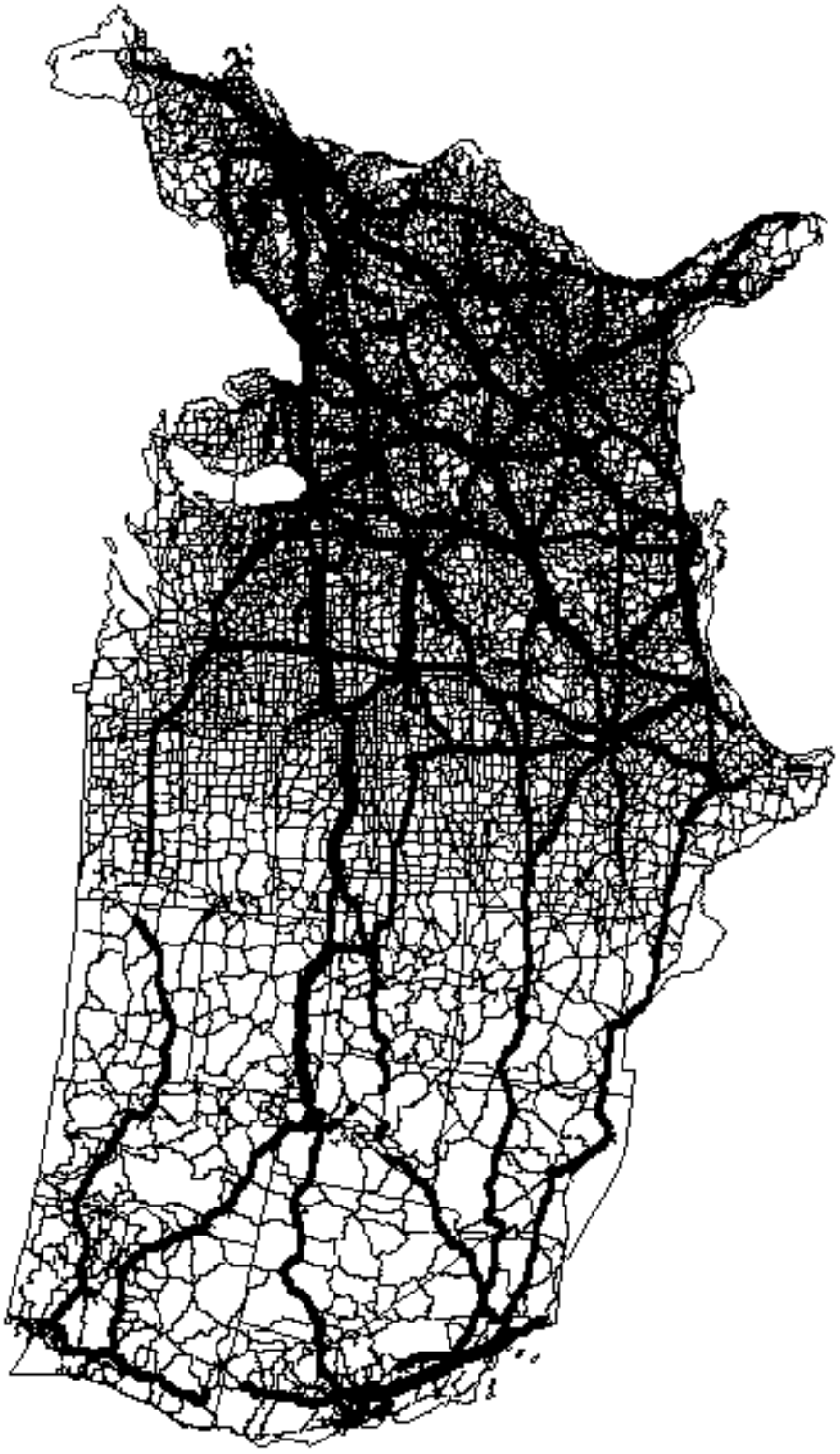
Additional demand for truck traffic will be generated from international, particularly Latin American, trade. A portion of the trade passing through Gulf of Mexican ports would likely utilize the new I-69 Corridor (see Exhibit 1-8).

The recent increase in freight shipments coupled with the significant growth in automobile traffic is taxing the existing highway system. These trends have resulted in increased traffic congestion, in both urban and rural areas of the corridor, and decreased safety for the traveling public. If these trends are left unchecked, the effect could be devastating to the freight community and the US economy, as a whole.

The implications of this increased congestion could potentially include:

- Reductions in productivity and inflated transportation costs
- Reduced ability to efficiently transport raw materials for production and finished products to market resulting in higher overhead costs and reduced profits
- Reduced ability to attract and retain industry in the central part of the United States.

Providing alternative routes, such as I-69 would assist in alleviating congestion on the existing highways, as well as provide alternative, more direct routes for transporting freight.



I-69
US 171 to I-20

Exhibit 1-5

TOTAL TRUCK FREIGHT FLOWS BY ROUTE (2020)

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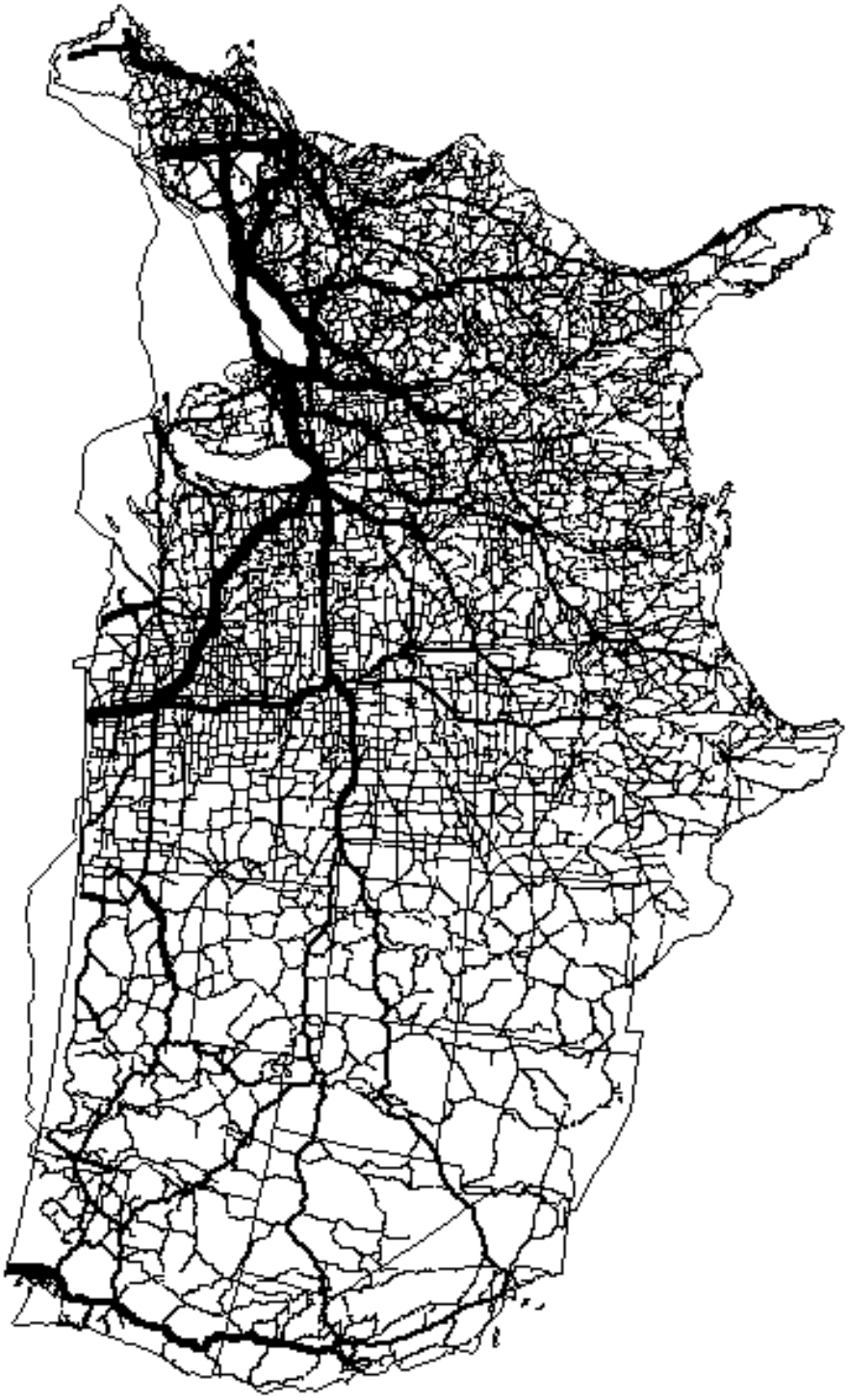

I-69
US 171 to I-20

Exhibit 1-6

US / CANADIAN TRUCK TRAFFIC BY US ROUTE (2020)

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DOTD

I-69
US 171 to I-20

Exhibit 1-7

US / MEXICAN TRUCK TRAFFIC BY US ROUTE (2020)

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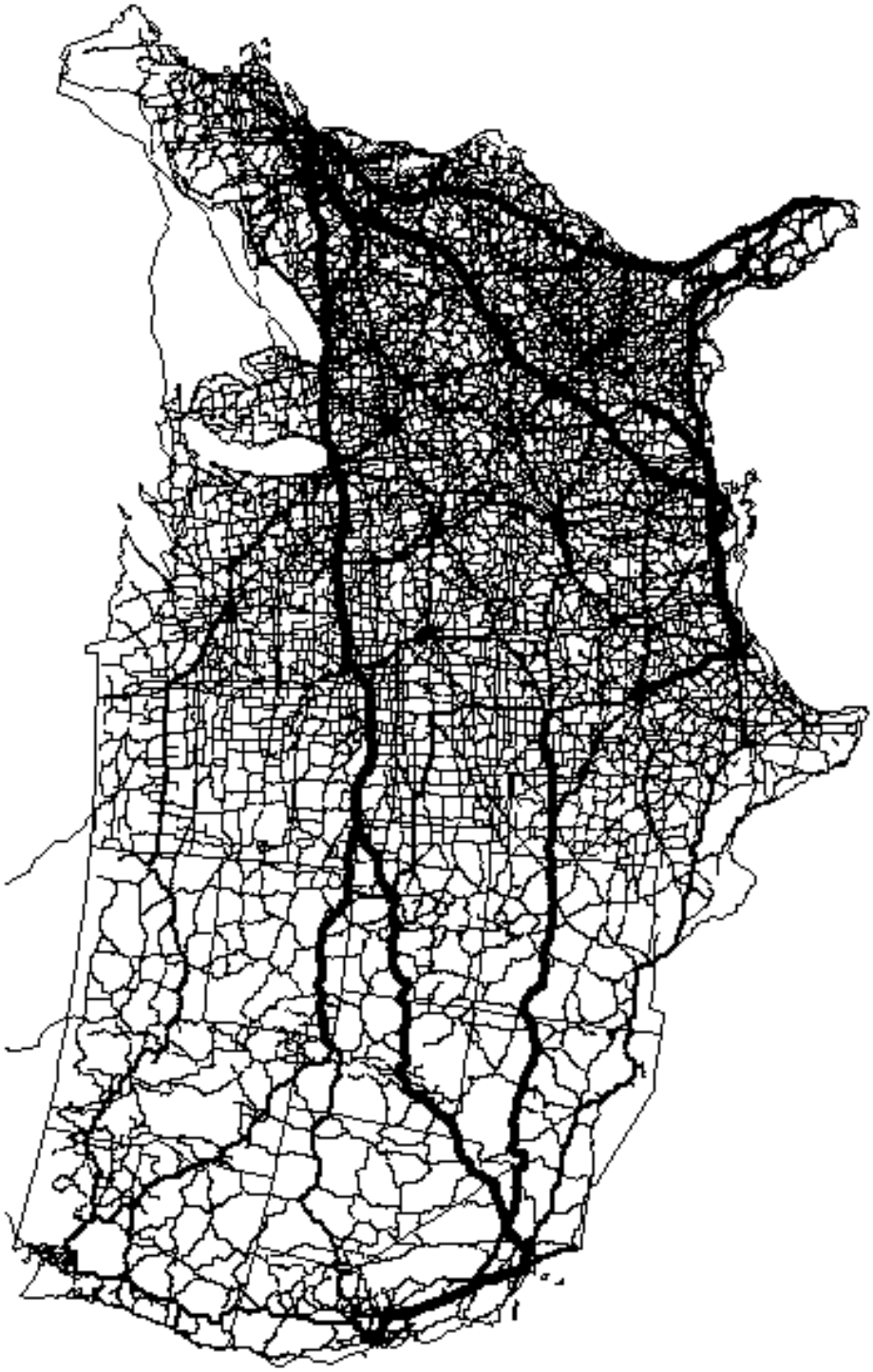

I-69
US 171 to I-20

Exhibit 1-8

TOTAL INTERNATIONAL TRUCK TRAFFIC GENERATED FROM US WATER PORTS (2020)

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NOT TO SCALE

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A travel demand model developed for the original feasibility study, coupled with freight origin/destination data, was used to estimate the likely ability that a new interstate facility would have on diverting freight movements to the I-69 Corridor (see Exhibit 1-9 and Exhibit 1-10). The anticipated daily volume of trucks utilizing the I-69 Corridor in the year 2030 ranges from approximately 18,000 south of Houston, 7,000 between Houston and Memphis, and 9,000 between Memphis and Indianapolis.

Economic Development

A large portion of the I-69 Corridor, especially in the Mississippi Delta and Lower Rio Grande Valley, have historically had limited access to economic development opportunities, and have poverty rates well above and median income levels well below the national average. With improved competitive position resulting from reduced transportation costs, enhanced reliability for the delivery of goods, and improved access to the employment base, I-69 could be instrumental in enabling communities to attract significantly more economic production activity. The original feasibility study estimated that improving only the section of I-69 between Houston and Indianapolis could result in over 27,000 new jobs and $11 billion in additional wages.

Mississippi Delta Initiative

In 1988, a bipartisan commission of federal legislators created the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission to investigate opportunities to provide economic and social opportunities for 219 counties/parishes in Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Tennessee, Missouri, Kentucky and Illinois (see Exhibit 1-11). Historically, the Mississippi Delta region has experienced economic hardships well above the national average. In the Delta region, poverty rates remain over 175 percent higher than the national average, over half of the counties have had poverty rates greater than 20 percent for the past four decades, and the per capita income in the region is only 53 percent of the national average.

Since 1998, a variety of initiatives have been promoted to make advances in many areas of transportation, housing, environmental protection, economic development, health care, education, and other issues vital to the region.

The Commission's transportation goal envisioned the promotion of economic growth through an improved network of highways, airports, rail, and port facilities. The I-69 Corridor and its associated connections closely parallel the goals developed by the Commission. This new interstate corridor provides improved access to markets on both sides of the Mississippi, reduces transportation costs for local businesses, provides an incentive for new businesses to locate in the region, and enables travelers and tourists to travel through the region, resulting in additional roadside expenditures.

Lower Rio Grande Valley

The Lower Rio Grande Valley has experienced a similar history of above average poverty rates and below average median income levels. Counties in the Lower Rio Grande Valley have median household incomes that range from 40 to 60 percent of the national average and county poverty rates that range from 160 percent to over 5 times the national average (see Exhibit 1-12).

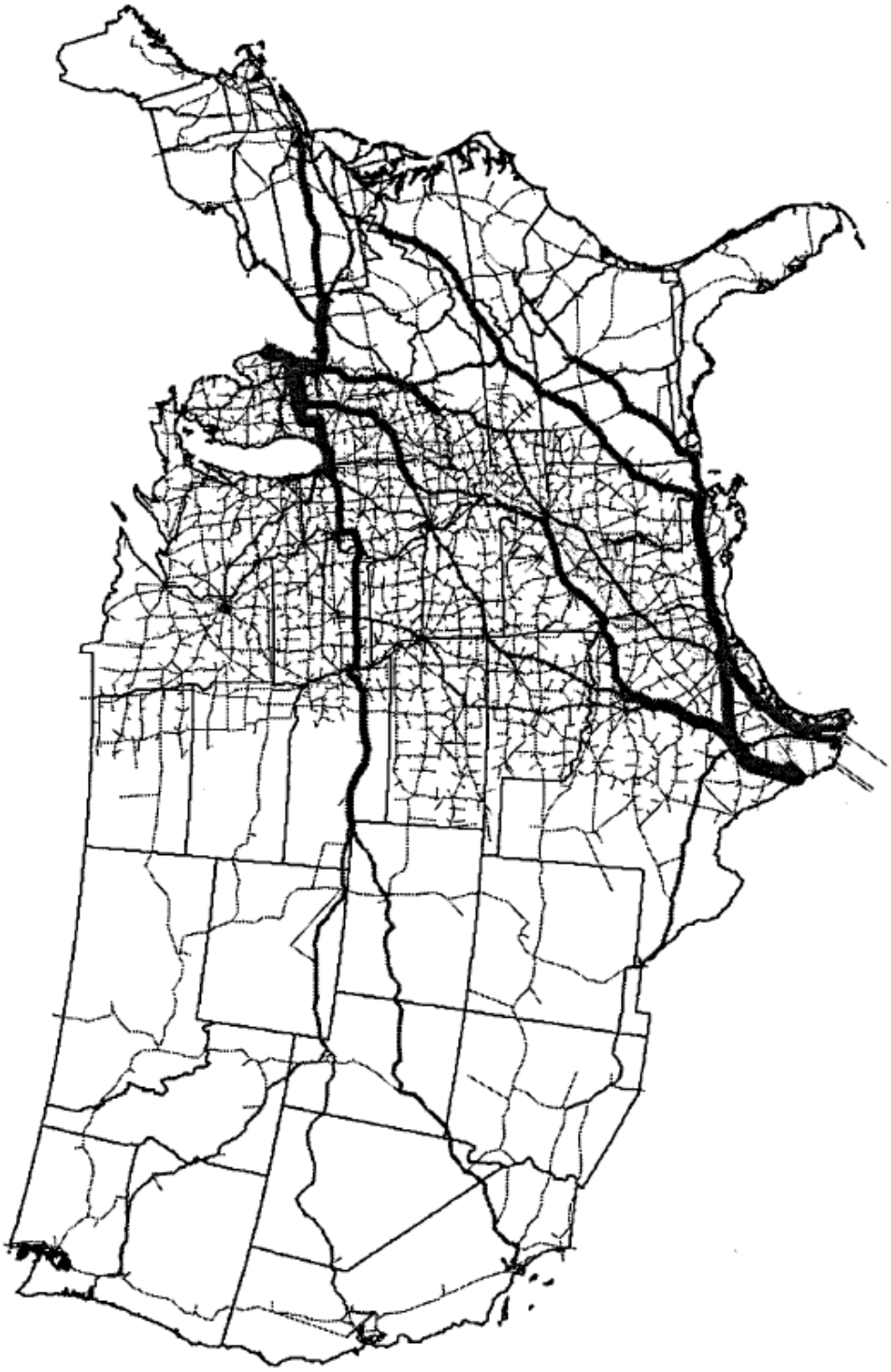
System Linkage

Development of the proposed I-69 Corridor would provide a continuous roadway link designed to Interstate highway standards from the Mexican border in Texas to the Canadian border in Michigan, a length of more than 1,600 miles. An improved I-69 would provide the following system linkage benefits:

- Currently, no direct Interstate highway type facility exists between the major population centers named in the Congressional legislation, including Indianapolis, Memphis, Shreveport, and Houston. In total, I-69 would connect 10 urban areas with populations in excess of 50,000
- Several small to medium sized urban areas in the I-69 Corridor do not currently have direct access to the interstate. Those communities include Bloomington, Indiana; Millington, Tennessee; Clarksdale, Mississippi; Monticello and El Dorado, Arkansas; as well as Nacogdoches, Lufkin, Victoria, Harlingen, McAllen, Brownsville, and Pharr, Texas
- An improved I-69 in the urban areas would provide a means of upgrading travel efficiencies on already overburdened freeways, provide an improved connection to important transportation corridors and radial freeways, and provide an improved connection to modal and multi-modal terminals in proximity to I-69
- I-69 would provide improved crossings of both the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. Improved major river crossings would provide improved economic development opportunities as well as additional river crossings in times of flooding or national emergencies, such as the potential earthquake along the New Madrid fault.
- An improved I-69 would also provide improved connections to alternative border crossing locations in Mexico, especially in the Brownsville and McAllen areas of the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

1.2.5 Sections of Independent Utility

The I-69 Corridor consists of an extension of existing I-69 from Port Huron, Michigan to the Texas/Mexico border. With a total length of over 1,600 miles, the added sections of I-69 will require many years to complete.



I-69
US 171 to I-20

Exhibit 1-9

TRUCK FREIGHT FLOWS DIVERTED TO I-69 (2020)-INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENTS THROUGH TEXAS AND MICHIGAN PORTS

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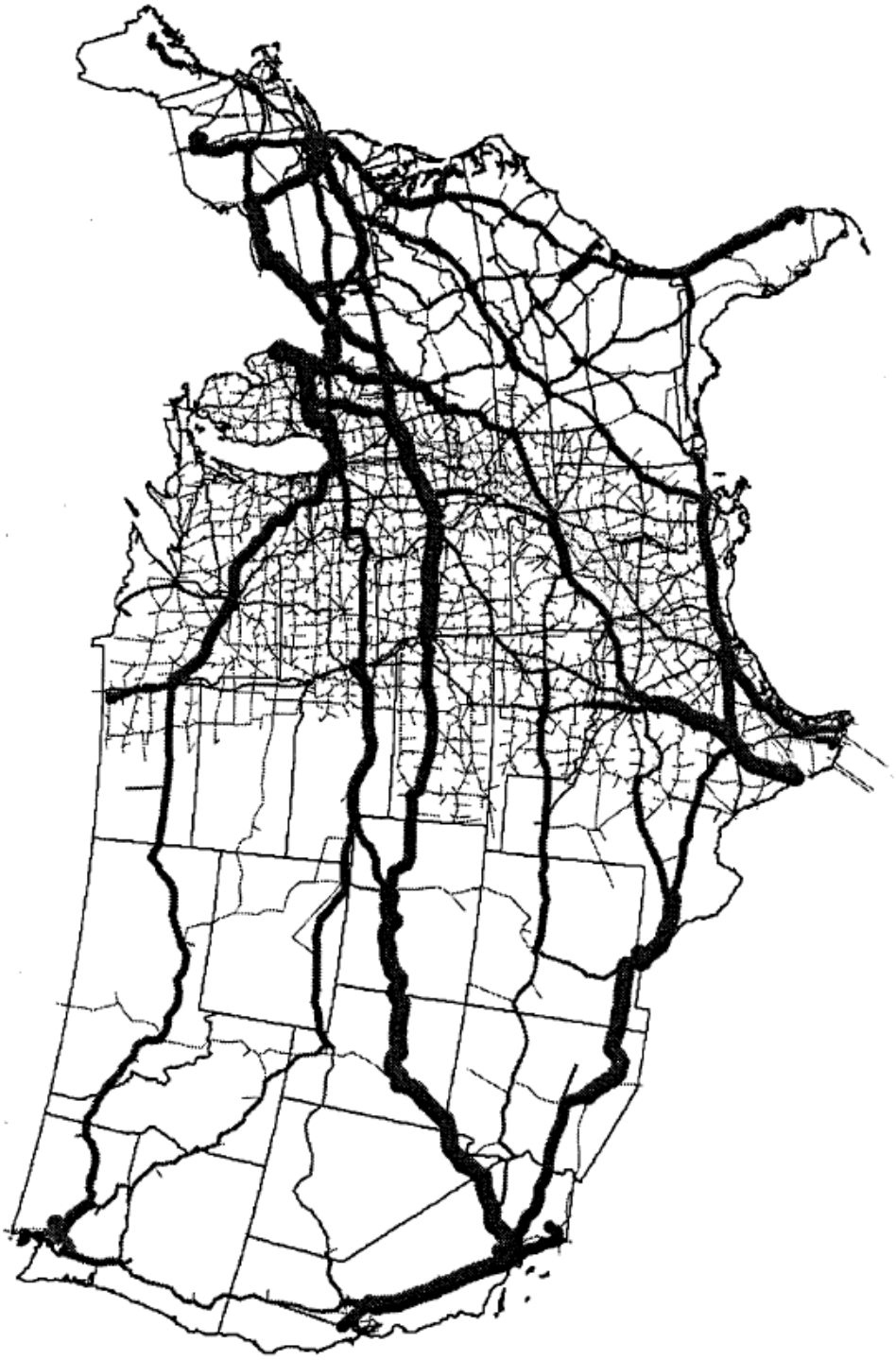

I-69
US 171 to I-20

Exhibit 1-10

TRUCK FREIGHT FLOWS DIVERTED TO I-69 (2020) – ALL TRUCK MOVEMENTS

Baker | NOT TO SCALE | DOTD

I-69
US 171 to I-20

Exhibit 1-11

MISSISSIPPI DELTA INITIATIVE TARGET COUNTIES

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This length precludes development of the full corridor as a single construction project and precludes an environmental analysis of the entire corridor. Furthermore, the work to be undertaken varies along the route and includes widening, reconstruction, and relocation of existing roadways to development of an entirely new highway on new location.

The practical approach was to undertake a series of projects that all fit into and are consistent with the overall purpose and need for I-69. In order to approach this in a realistic manner, the entire corridor was divided into viable sections, each of which can be constructed in a reasonable time frame by the state or states involved. Each of these sections is referred to as a Section of Independent Utility (SIU).

A given SIU may be in place for several years before an adjacent section is completed and open to traffic, hence the concept of having independent utility. The process of defining these SIUs involves identifying or framing a highway project that meets a number of principles and criteria.

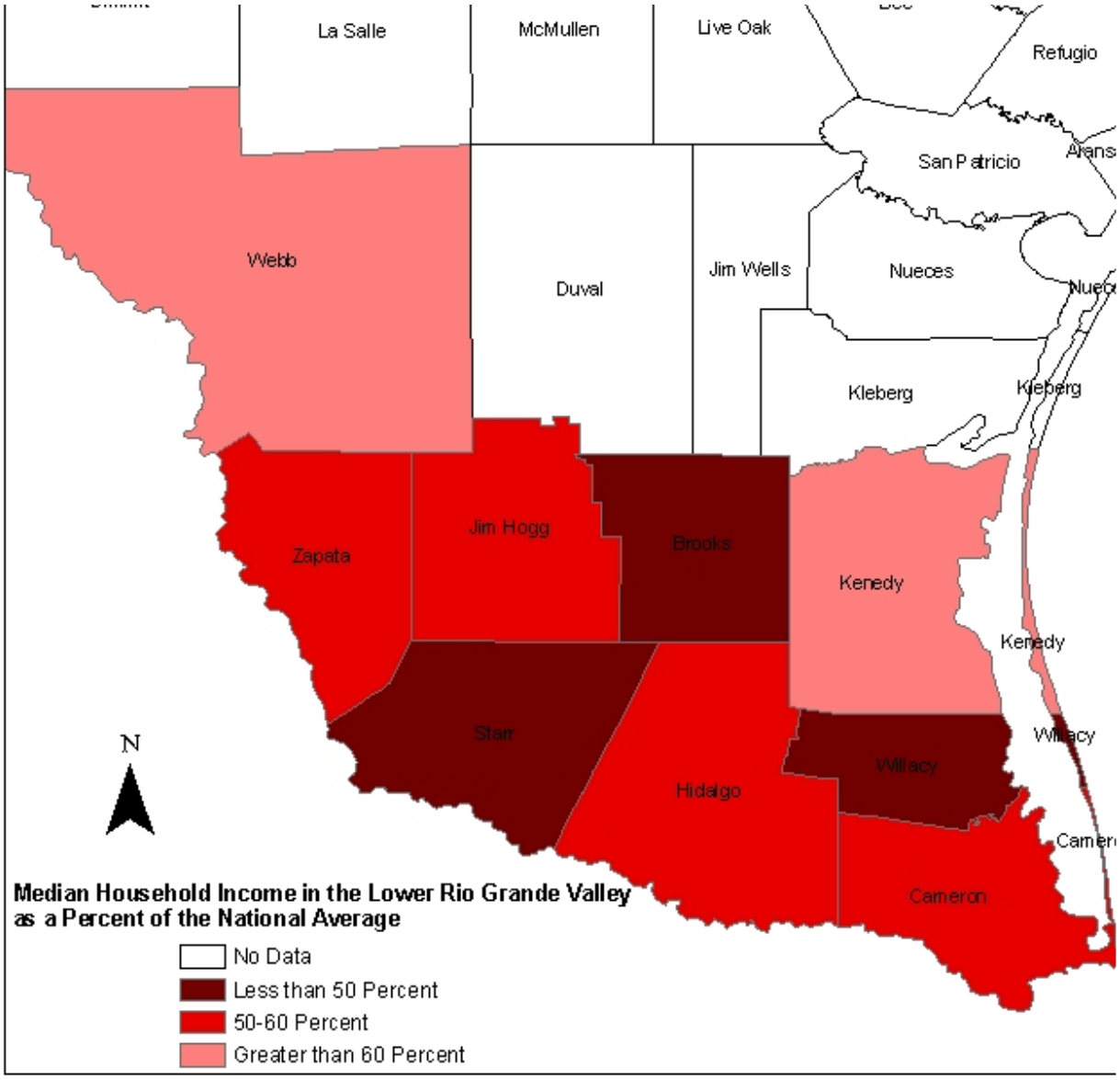
FHWA Guidance

The FHWA memorandum dated November 3, 1993 provides information to guide the establishment of logical termini for a proposed project (or action). It refers to concepts and objectives contained in existing regulations. Three general principles are outlined in the FHWA regulations in 23 CFR 771.111(f) that are to be used to frame or define a highway project. In order to ensure meaningful evaluation of alternatives, and to avoid commitments to related transportation improvements before they are fully evaluated, each SIU should permit a proposed action to be evaluated in an environmental impact statement (EIS) that shall:

- ❑ Connect logical termini and be of sufficient length to address environmental matters on a broad scope;
- ❑ Have independent utility or independent significance, i.e., be usable and be a reasonable expenditure even if no additional transportation improvements in the area are made; and,
- ❑ Not restrict consideration of alternatives for other reasonably foreseeable transportation improvements.

Additional Criteria for I-69

For the purposes of the I-69 Corridor, the FHWA guidelines have been expanded upon to establish criteria for evaluating the SIUs. The following is the list of criteria that was used to determine the termini for each SIU within the I-69 Corridor. This is based on the premise that I-69 is to be an Interstate Highway in accordance with the mandate by Congress.



I-69 US 171 to I-20		
Exhibit 1-12 **LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME**		
Baker	NOT TO SCALE	DOTD

Each SIU should have logical termini based on factors that include:

- ❑ Be at an Interstate Highway, US or State numbered route (including toll roads) that have regional connectivity, at a NHS intermodal facility, or at an international border
- ❑ Be within the adopted alignment for the I-69 Corridor
- ❑ Maintain the integrity of the full I-69 Corridor alignment
- ❑ Permit the SIU to make a connection with the crossing Interstate Highway, US or State-numbered Route, or major local facility at or within a limited distance from the terminus
- ❑ Form one terminus for each adjacent SIU of I-69
- ❑ The SIU should not force acceptance of significantly adverse environmental impacts that could be avoided while still remaining within the adopted limits of the I-69 Corridor
- ❑ SIU termini should be established giving consideration to political boundaries and jurisdictions
- ❑ Each SIU should have a construction cost estimate that is manageable for the specific state(s) so that the project can be let to contract over a reasonable time frame
- ❑ Each SIU must be independently useful, serving the I-69 or regional Purpose and Need that would complement I-69, even if other sections of I-69 are never constructed
- ❑ Each SIU should permit alternatives that provide immediate relief to nearby facilities and serve traffic generators without long-term, negative traffic complications if a decision were made to not extend I-69
- ❑ The SIU should not limit nor restrict consideration (in separate studies) of alternatives for other reasonably foreseeable transportation improvements (e.g. committed facilities in the vicinity of the I-69 Corridor as well as other facilities on an officially adopted long-range plan)
- ❑ Termini for each SIU should be set giving consideration to other foreseeable transportation improvements
- ❑ Each resulting SIU should be at a location that does not force a particular alternative action upon previously adopted improvements along or near the SIU.

1.2.6 I-69 Sections of Independent Utility

The application of these criteria to the I-69 Corridor resulted in 26 SIUs within the I-69 Corridor. An additional 7 SIUs, for a total of 32, were added for roadways that connect to the I-69 Corridor, referred to as "I-69 Connectors." The final SIUs resulted

from discussions with each state department of transportation. They form a continuous route from the Michigan/Canada border to the Texas/Mexico border. Each SIU (see Exhibit 1-13) has a common terminus with adjacent SIU and are listed in Table 1-1.

I-69 Connectors

As detailed in the current definition of I-69 in the TEA-21 legislation, a number of connecting routes are included as part of the I-69 Corridor. These additional connections are separate SIUs and are listed in Table 1-2.

Although Congress designated the I-69 Corridor as an Interstate highway, the FHWA NEPA process requires consideration of other transportation modes and alternatives to determine if they potentially could meet the identified purpose and need for the corridor. As a part of the I-69 Corridor Special Environmental Study, a modal analysis was performed to assess the potential of each mode to satisfy the overall purpose of the I-69 Corridor. Based upon a review of the characteristics of each modal alternative and the way in which they currently provide services in the corridor, all are essential to meet the diverse and complicated pattern of freight movements and personal travel in the I-69 Corridor. Together, the various transportation modes form an intermodal transportation system that provides important opportunities for travel choices so that the particular needs of specific movements can generally be met. Nevertheless, it was concluded that an Interstate highway in the I-69 Corridor is uniquely suited to address the national needs of domestic and international freight movement, economic development and system continuity.

This is consistent with the Congressional designation of the I-69 Corridor as an Interstate highway. Unlike the relatively limited spectrum of travel needs that would be served by the other modal alternatives, an Interstate highway facility would be responsive to a wide range of needs on a local, regional, national and international basis.

1.3 REGIONAL AND LOCAL NEED

1.3.1 System Linkage

The Shreveport-Bossier Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan 1990-2010 identified the future extension of LA 3132 (Inner Loop) as part of the orderly development of a transportation system to meet future traffic demands. LA 3132 terminated at the LA 526 (Bert Kouns Industrial Loop) approximately 1.6 miles from the LA 1 – LA 526 intersection. The identified future extension of LA 3132 initially to LA 1 south of the urbanized areas and ultimately crossing the Red River and connecting with US 71 and I-20 would relieve existing and anticipated future traffic congestion (Shreveport 1991).

Findings of a compatibility study concluded that the proposed I-69 Corridor through the Shreveport-Bossier area was highly compatible with the

LA 3132 (Inner Loop) extension and could readily be incorporated as part of the Region's southeast loop system. These study findings were incorporated into and became part of the Corridor 18 Special Issues Study.

1.3.2 Economic Development

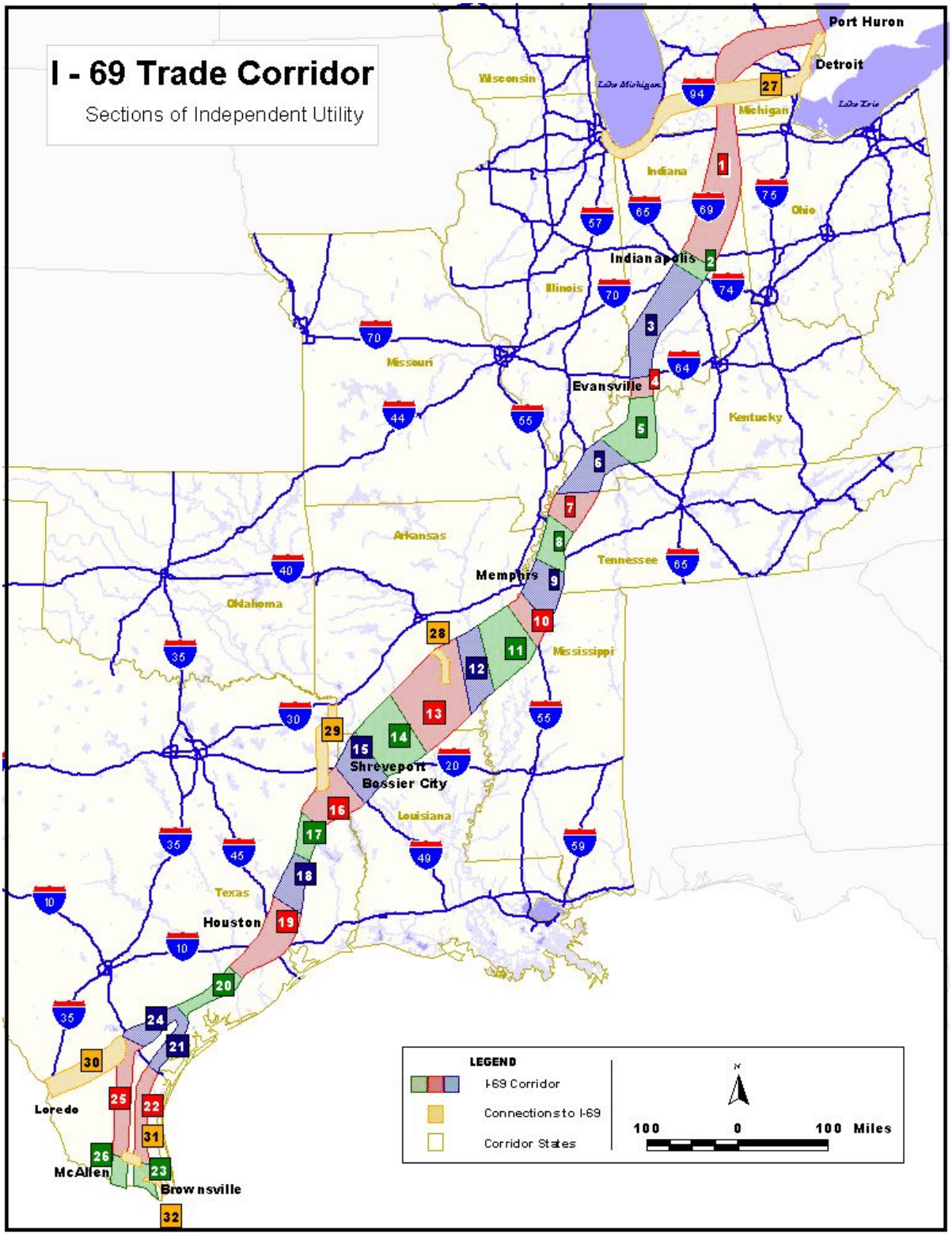
The Port of Shreveport-Bossier, a 2,000-acre complex, is being developed on the Red River Waterway approximately 5.5 miles south of the LA 1 – LA 526 intersection. Transportation access to the major market areas west of Shreveport, Louisiana is a vital part of the development of this facility and economic growth in the region. Current access to and from the LA 3132 (Inner Loop), I-49, I-20 transportation system and the Port for the anticipated heavy truck traffic is via LA 1, LA 523 and LA 526, which are uncontrolled access arterial highways through a rapidly developing urbanized business area.

The Barksdale Air Force Base is the area's largest employer with a workforce of 9,500 active duty military, civilians, and reservists. The base, with a payroll of $260 Million and an annual economic impact on the area of nearly $450 Million is west of and adjacent to the Study Area.

The addition of the I-69 project would significantly enhance the economic benefits of the Region's southeast loop system with its positive interactions with the Barksdale Air Force Base Master Plan, development of accessibility to the Port of Shreveport-Bossier, and networking through LA 3132, I-49, and I-20 to all major transportation systems within the Shreveport-Bossier area, as well as major regional transportation systems beyond this immediate area (Shreveport 1992).

1.3.3 Intermodal Connectivity

The Port of Shreveport-Bossier, a fast growing multi-modal inland transportation and distribution center began operation in April 1997. The Port is located on the Red River and connects Shreveport to New Orleans and the Gulf Ports via the Red and Mississippi River systems. By 1999, more than 374,600 tons of cargo was moved by barge and rail car and in April 2000 the Port celebrated its One Million-Ton milestone in its 37th month of regular operation, an unusually short time frame for an inland port. More than 1,700,000 tons of cargo was moved by barge and rail car in 2010, making it the most active and largest tonnage year in the Port's history (Port 2011). Cargoes handled at the Port include aggregate, frac sand, potash, steel coil, zinc ingots, lumber, paper, starch, soda ash, steel pipe, agri-chemicals, and petroleum products.



I-69
US 171 to I-20

Exhibit 1-13

I-69 TRADE CORRIDOR SECTIONS OF INDEPENDENT UTILITY

Baker

NOT TO SCALE

DOTD

Table 1-1
SECTIONS OF INDEPENDENT UTILITY FOR THE I-69 CORRIDOR

SIU	Description	Remarks
1	Michigan/Canada Border (at Port Huron, MI) to Indianapolis, IN	SIU covers the existing portion of I-69 from Port Huron, Michigan at the US/Canada border to Indianapolis, Indiana
2	Indianapolis Urban Area	SIU provides for the extension of I-69 from the northeast side of the city of Indianapolis to the I-465 loop on the southwest side of the area. It is located completely within the Indianapolis metropolitan area
3	Indianapolis, IN to Evansville, IN	SIU connects from I-465S in the Indianapolis metropolitan area to I-64 north of Evansville and passes through rural southwestern Indiana. The southern terminus is at the I-64/I-164 interchange north of Evansville
4	Evansville Urban Area and Ohio River Crossing	SIU begins north of Evansville at the I-64/I-164 interchange and proceeds southerly to cross the Ohio River in the Evansville metropolitan area. The southern terminus would be near Henderson, KY at the Pennyrile Parkway interchange with SH 425.
5	Henderson, KY to Eddyville, KY	The termini of this SIU were selected to permit consideration of alternative alignments south of Henderson while connecting with I-24 near the end of the Western Kentucky Parkway or Wendell H. Ford Parkway, as the Kentucky General Assembly renamed it in 1998. Options include 1) use and potential improvement of the Pennyrile Parkway and the Wendell H. Ford/Western Kentucky Parkway to I-24 near the Tennessee River and the Land Between-the-Lakes and 2) a more direct route on new location through western Kentucky
6	Eddyville, KY to Fulton, KY	SIU covers the remainder of the I-69 corridor under consideration in Kentucky proceeding from the I-24/Wendell H Ford (Western Kentucky) Park-way to the US 51/Purchase Parkway interchange near Fulton, Kentucky at the Kentucky/Tennessee state line. The route follows I-24 in the vicinity of the Land Between the Lakes, a sensitive environmental area, and then proceeds southwesterly along the Purchase Parkway
7	Fulton, KY to Dyersburg, TN	SIU utilizes US 51 from the Purchase Parkway to the I-155 spur that crosses the Mississippi River at Dyersburg, TN. The SIU is made up of three major "segments": 1) the upgrade of the US 51/Purchase Parkway (US 51 Bypass) Inter-change in South Fulton, TN, 2) the upgrade of the route (US 51 Corridor) from north of Union City, TN, to south of Troy, TN (this study section may include multiple location alternatives), and 3) the existing freeway section from south of Troy, TN, to the US 51/I-155 Inter-change at Dyersburg, TN
8	I-155 to Millington, TN, north of Memphis	SIU involves the upgrade and relocation of US 51 from the vicinity of Dyersburg to the Paul Barret Parkway south of Millington. This terminus in the Millington area permits study of outer loop possibilities within the Memphis urban area for the routing of I-69 as well as the more direct routing along I-40/I-240

Source: FHWA, 2002

Table 1-1 (cont.)
SECTIONS OF INDEPENDENT UTILITY FOR THE I-69 CORRIDOR

SIU	Description	Remarks
9	Memphis Urban Area	SIU would extend from Millington on US 51 north of Memphis to I-55 south of Memphis at Mississippi SH 304. This permits evaluation of the routing of I-69 through the Memphis area along a variety of different routes
10	MS 304 Corridor	SIU covers a segment of Mississippi State Highway 304 that is currently under development by the Mississippi DOT connecting I-55 to US 61 in northern Mississippi
11	Mississippi Alignment	SIU connects two SIU that are currently being developed. The MS 304 Corridor and the current study of a new Mississippi River bridge are current projects. This SIU would extend from the US 61/MS 304 Interchange to the Mississippi Route 1/Route 8 intersection near Rosedale, MS
12	Mississippi River Crossing	SIU coincides with the corridor locations being studied as a part of the Great River Bridge environmental studies to determine a new crossing of the Mississippi River near Rosedale, MS
13	US 65 to El Dorado, AR	SIU extends on new alignment from the terminus of the previous Mississippi River Crossing corridor to US 167 in the vicinity of El Dorado, Arkansas. This provides new system connectivity in southern Arkansas
14	El Dorado, AR to Shreveport, LA	SIU continues I-69 on a new location to a terminus on I-20 east of Bossier City. A previously identified location for this connection at I-20 was the interchange of LA 157 and I-20 at Haughton, LA
15	Shreveport/Bossier City Urban Area	SIU provides for determination of the routing in this urban area and extends from I-20 on the east side to US 171 in southwestern Shreveport near Stonewall, LA. The general corridor resulting from the Special Issues Study adopted an alignment around the southeastern portion of the urban area based upon the 1992 study Interstate 69 and Inner Loop Expansion: Compatibility Report
16	Louisiana/Texas Alignment	SIU provides for the determination of the routing from the Shreveport/Bossier City area to the northeastern terminus for a current study of I-69 in the Nacogdoches, Texas area. The analyses would include determining the location for I-69 at the Texas/Louisiana border and near Carthage and Tenaha, Texas.
17	Lufkin/Nacogdoches, Texas	SIU involves the existing study area in the US 59 Master Plan that includes alignment alternatives for US 59 from north of Nacogdoches to north of Diboll, Texas. This section corresponds to the locations along US 59 being studied by the Texas Department of Transportation in this area
18	Eastern Texas	SIU takes I-69 from the southern terminus of an existing study at its connection to existing US 59 at Diboll to the north end of the Cleveland Relief Route for US 59. The southern terminus is the beginning of the section of existing US 59 that has full access control. This is near the northern limits of the Houston metropolitan area

Source: FHWA, 2002

Table 1-1 (cont.)
SECTIONS OF INDEPENDENT UTILITY FOR THE I-69 CORRIDOR

SIU	Description	Remarks
19	Houston Urban Area	SIU provides for the determination of the routing of I-69 across the Houston metropolitan area. The northern terminus of this SIU is the north end of the US 59 Cleveland Relief Route. The southern terminus would be at the connection of US 59 South with TX 60 near Hungerford. The northern limit for this SIU established at Cleveland permits full consideration of upgrades and/or relocation of US 59/I-69 entering the Houston area, as well as the connection between US 59/I-69 and the Grand Parkway (North). It incorporates the study limits of current work on Route Feasibility Study for I-69
20	Houston (Richmond, Texas) to Victoria, Texas	The northern terminus of this SIU is the connection of US 59 South with Texas Highway 60. This SIU provides for the determination of the upgrade of US 59 from the Houston area to the Victoria area. At Victoria, there is a need to determine the urban routing for I-69 with a connection to US 77 for extension towards I-37 near Corpus Christi as well as the routing along existing US 59 to George West. The southern terminus would be at the junction of US 77 with Route 175, a limited access facility extending from US 59 to the southern sector of Victoria TX to connect with US 77
21	Victoria, TX to Corpus Christi, TX	SIU permits analysis of the northern portion of the US 77 alignment for I-69 from Victoria to the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The southern terminus at I-37 northwest of Corpus Christi permits separate evaluations of connections and alternatives to Corpus Christi
22	Corpus Christi, TX to Raymondville, TX	SIU extends I-69 using the US 77 Corridor to a potential connection over to the US 281 Corridor near Raymondville
23	Raymondville, TX to Texas/Mexico Border	SIU extends along US 77 to the border by way of Harlingen. It permits evaluation of options in the Harlingen/ Brownsville, Texas, and Matamoros urban complex including the border crossing. This also connects with the separate corridor along FM 511 to the Port of Brownsville
24	Victoria, TX to George West, TX	SIU encompasses possible routings of I-69 from Victoria, Texas southwest along the existing US 59 corridor to the vicinity of George West, Texas at US 281
25	George West, TX to Edinburg, TX	SIU provides for the evaluation of upgrades to US 281 from the vicinity of US 59 (and connections to I-37) to TX 186 at Edinburg, Texas, with a potential connection to the Raymondville area
26	Edinburg to Texas/Mexico Border	SIU permits evaluation of all alternatives to connect from the I-69/TX 186 terminus to the Texas/Mexico border near Reynosa

Source: FHWA, 2002

Table 1-2
SECTIONS OF INDEPENDENT UTILITY FOR THE I-69 CONNECTORS

SIU	Description	Remarks
27	I-94 Connector	SIU follows existing I-94 between Port Huron, MI, the Detroit metropolitan area and the Chicago metropolitan area
28	Southeast Arkansas I-69 Connector	SIU links Pine Bluff, Arkansas, to I-69 near Monticello, Arkansas. This section corresponds to the routes along US 65 and US 425 being studied by AHTD in this area
29	US 59/US 259 Texarkana Connector	SIU is a connection from I-30/US 59 in Texarkana to I-69/US 59 in the vicinity of Nacogdoches, Texas.
30	US 59 Laredo Connector	SIU is a link from I-35/US 59 in Laredo to I-69/US 281 in the vicinity of George West, Texas.
31	US 77/US 281 Lower Rio Grande Valley Connector	SIU is a connection from I-69/US 281 near Edinburg, Texas to I-69/US 77 near Raymondville, Texas
32	FM 511 Connector	SIU is located in the Lower Rio Grande Valley connecting from US 77 near Olmito, Texas to the Port of Brownsville

Source: FHWA, 2002

The Port features industrial capacity water and sewer, two general cargo wharves, three liquid cargo wharves, connection to Union Pacific mainline railroad, and a roll on/roll off ramp.

The Port is projected to generate substantial truck traffic as raw material and products are transferred from barges to trucks. The Shreveport area ranks among the top five cities in the Nation capable of reaching the largest segments of the population with next day service. Nearly 30 million people and some of the South's strongest consumer markets, including Dallas-Fort Worth, are within one day's reach by motor freight (SBD 2003). The I-69 project would facilitate efficient movement of raw materials to markets via I-49, I-20 and the Interstate highway system.

1.3.4 Project Independent Utility and Logical Termini

The I-69 Special Environmental Study, Task C Report - Sections of Independent Utility report concluded that the I-69 project had independent utility because it addresses local and regional traffic needs in the Shreveport-Bossier City metropolitan area and assists in responding to economic concerns by providing better access to the Port of Shreveport-Bossier. The established logical termini allow for consideration of routes on new location in the southeastern area of the Shreveport-Bossier City metropolitan area.

1.3.5 Identification of Locally Based Project Need

Coordination with local elected officials in and around the Study Area identified several locally based needs for the project. These include:

- Intermodal connectivity with rail and the Port of Shreveport-Bossier
- Compatibility with existing heavy rail lines and consideration adding/relocating heavy rail lines within the same transportation corridor in the future
- Attracting new businesses to Study Area and economic improvement of northwest Louisiana, especially south DeSoto Parish
- Maintaining close proximity to the Shreveport / Bossier City metropolitan area and the Port of Shreveport-Bossier.

Information obtained at the June 2001 public meetings found that citizens would use the new highway as a link to existing Interstates for travel to medical facilities, shopping areas, work, and recreation areas.

1.4 PURPOSE AND NEED SUMMARY

The I-69 project was identified in TEA-21 as a component of the I-69 Corridor and as a Section of Independent Utility in the I-69 (Corridor 18) Special Environmental Study Task C Report, Sections of Independent Utility (SIU Report, August 1999). As such, this project will serve to function as a critical link in the Interstate system that will serve travel, economic development, and commercial demands of the south-central United States as well as serve the local and regional needs of northwest Louisiana.

Construction of the proposed project would:

- Complete a portion of the Congressionally-mandated Interstate Highway 69, expanding Interstate linkage between Shreveport / Bossier City and the rest of the Nation
- Improve international and interstate movement of freight and people
- Facilitate economic development and enhance economic growth opportunities domestically and internationally
- Improve the intermodal connectivity of existing truck, rail and port transportation modes, including the Port of Shreveport-Bossier
- Complete transportation system improvements identified in the Shreveport-Bossier Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan and have independent utility or independent significance, i.e., be usable and be a reasonable expenditure even if no additional transportation improvements in the area are made.